

By Erich Thurow, Chairman D200 Education Foundation

In September the District 200 Education Foundation had the honor of announcing the recipients of 64 Impact Grants. These grants provide money to fund projects and activities in the district from Pre-K to high school that, as our motto explains, would not otherwise happen. It is my pleasure to explain one of the projects this month, with others being featured throughout the year.

Bob Teuber is a veteran teacher in the district and teaches 4th and 5th grade at Westwood Elementary School. Bob's project called "Water Bottle Filling Station" was awarded \$400 in this year's presentation. The funds were used to retrofit an ElKay drinking fountain and add a water bottle station for use by the students and staff of Westwood.

Bob pointed out, "We encourage kids to bring water bottles to school to help keep all children properly hydrated. In the past if a child wished to fill his or her water bottle with cold water he or she would stand at the drinking fountain and very slowly fill the bottle while the other children waited their turn in line. Not only did this take a great deal of class time, it was also very messy; children often spilled water on the floor causing unsafe conditions.

Healthy eating and drinking has always been promoted by the district's nurses and Westwood is no exception. Fresh water as opposed to sugary beverages is encouraged. Students are also encouraged to be mindful of our environment and are discouraged from bringing disposable water bottles to school. Bob pointed out in his grant application, that the bottle filling station did not need any extra utility work as it was replacing a standard drinking fountain.

The new water filling station is located on the lower level at Westwood. That is where the majority of the 4th and 5th grade student classrooms are located. In addition, this location grants easy access to school visitors and people attending special events or programs in the school auditorium.

Bob concluded, "The ElKay Bottle Filler was an excellent way to demonstrate to the children the savings over the use of disposable plastic bottles since the filler has a counter showing the number of bottles filled. As of last week, the counter shows the equivalent of over 35,000 bottles already filled. This visual counter encourages children to either fill their reusable water containers or refill their plastic water bottles helping them become more environmentally conscious."

This is just one of the dozens of diverse projects we were able to fund. Included in this year's list are grants to assist with overnight camping, scrapbooking, field trips, libraries, art and literature projects and performances and our continuing support of the Northwood Veterans Day program. We provided well over \$22,000 this year, and our Foundation members are working hard to prepare for this winter's annual auction and dinner where funds will be raised for next year's projects. Hope you can join us on January 31. Happy holidays!